

DRAFT
COMMUNITIES AT RISK
WILDLAND FIRE ASSESSMENT PLAN
for
CLARK COUNTY IDAHO
May 14, 2003

This plan will analyze the fire risks in Clark County and suggest mitigation measures to reduce fire risks.

A Wildland Fire Interagency Group has been meeting and discussing the fire risks and mitigation measures that may be required for the best protection of Clark County.

Clark County is a very large county approximately 1,128,000 acres. Federal and State of Idaho lands are more than 2/3 of the County land base. Population is light throughout the County and it has two cities, Dubois and Spencer. Farming and ranching is the main livelihood. With the large Federal land base, recreation is an important activity. Summer homes are beginning to show up on a scattered basis throughout the County. Some of these homes are being built in areas that have fuel types that are hazardous or adjacent to hazardous fuel types.

The Fire Interagency Group involved the following:

- Clark County Commissioner
- Bureau of Land Management Fire Mitigation and Education Officers
- Caribou-Targhee National Forest Fire Prevention Specialist
- Caribou-Targhee National Forest Fuels Specialist
- Clark County Emergency Services Coordinator
- Clark County LEPC Chairperson
- Bureau of Disaster Services
- Spencer City Mayor
- Dubois City Mayor
- Dubois City Councilman
- Dubois Ranger District
- Clark County Sheriffs Office
- Clark County Road and Bridge
- USDA Sheep Station
- Citizen – Spencer, Idaho
- Clark County Clerk
- Clark County Planner
- City/County Volunteer Fire Dept. Chief
- Idaho Department of Lands Resource Supervisor-Timber
- Clark County Fire Risk Analysis Coordinator

The group looked at areas of the County that were at risk to the threat of wildland fire. The County was divided into zones by watershed drainages and each drainage was evaluated by fuel types, slope, access for emergency vehicles, Fire Department response time, past fire occurrence and values at risk.

Each drainage was evaluated and given a fire risk rating of high, moderate or low. Some of the larger drainages were broken into smaller units. These were the Beaver Creek and Camas Creek zones. See the attached table for reference.

Our purpose is to evaluate the wildland fire potential impacts and to provide mitigation measures to reduce the risk of wildland fire. Our objective would be to protect life, property and natural resources. The priority would be protection of life followed by protection of valued structures and third would be to protect natural resources.

Following is a list of concerns our group recognized that were fire risks in Clark County:

Fire Risks or Hazards:

1. Un-maintained tall grass and weeds in vacant lots or around abandoned vehicles in yards make a likely fire hazard in both Dubois and Spencer cities.
2. The City of Spencer is located 13 miles away from the Fire Station of Dubois and with the volunteer fire department in Dubois response time may be too long in a fire emergency. A structure may not be saved. There are 6 fire hydrants in Spencer, which are gravity fed by the creek in Huntley Canyon. Pressure for the hydrants is questionable and as the creek decreases the volume decreases. The hose on the wheeled handcart is 2 inch and mostly 1 ¼ inch but it is very old and may not be useable. There is a fire bell in Spencer but the rope is put high so children cannot reach it and adults may not be able to reach it either.
3. Finding rural residents in Clark County during an emergency such as fire is difficult because there is not an updated map with roads, names and numbers and the roads on the ground are not signed with name or road or street numbers.
4. Some of the homes and buildings in the County would be difficult to reach for emergencies by vehicles because of poor road conditions such as found with narrow single-lane un-maintained roads. Wet conditions often make these roads unusable by emergency vehicles.
5. Clark City/County Fire Department has a brush truck, which has gone to wildland fires and is sometimes the first to arrive. The volunteers on the County fire truck are at risk on the wildland fires without proper wildland fire training.
6. Communications – Lack of contact between fire fighters on any fire can be life threatening. With four agencies involved in fire suppression, contact between everyone is necessary, being able to contact by radio or cell phone has not always been possible.
7. There is a mutual aid agreement in Clark County in which the Bureau of Land Management or Forest Service can make initial attack on wildland fires without concern of ownership. However, there is not a joint or central information center in the County to provide wildland fire information to the general public.

8. Some homes in the County have been constructed in the timber and this hazardous fuel would be difficult to defend during a wildland fire.
9. There are more than 10,000 acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land in Clark County. This would provide an ignition point for lightning or man-caused fires.
10. Federal and State lands have some heavy fuel loading and makes the risk of wildland fires high. Fuel loading occurs in the sagebrush as well as timberlands. There are also some private lands with heavy fuel loading.
11. Every year the trains set fires along the railroad track and no one know how to contact the railroad to let them know so a train can be notified it is starting fires.
12. Haystacks are a potential fire from arsonists.
13. Fire equipment can carry noxious weeds from fire sites.

Our group also made a list of mitigation measures that are needed to reduce the wildland fire risk in Clark County. Following is that list:

Fire Risk Mitigation

1. Continue to have City/County Fire Department burn vacant lots in Spencer and Dubois, railroad and/or road right-of-ways to reduce hazardous fuels. When fire cannot be used during a dry summer or fall, use a tractor mower to cut fuels from vacant lots or railroad and/or road right-of-ways.
2. Maintain a firebreak around cities and Sheep Station during dry years.
3. Implement a fire prevention and education program that contacts businesses, residents, and rural homeowners and evaluates their residence or business for fire risk and provides a plan to protect their property for wildland fires.
4. Develop a map of roads with names, numbers, and signs so homes can be located for all emergencies including fire. Install signs on the ground to guide emergency vehicles.
5. Implement the Incident Command System for suppressing wildland and structure fires, which will provide the correct command for different type fires.
6. Encourage Clark City/County Fire Department volunteers to take training for wildland fires.
7. Support volunteer fire department by providing compensation for the time spent in fire training.
8. Provide adequate communication on fire incidents by providing radio and cell phones that use common frequencies and cell towers. Develop a standard radio procedure among all agencies.
9. Develop a local interagency joint information center, which would include Clark City/County Fire Department, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service and State of Idaho. The information center would be activated during wildland fires and would ensure accurate up-to-date information is delivered to the public. The agencies working together would be trained in the National Incident Command System.

10. Encourage more volunteers for Clark City/County Fire Department.
11. Future County development is done in a manner that protects homes from the threat of wildland fire. County Planning and Zoning should consider adopting the 30-foot set back clause for new homes being built and the wildland fire code for new construction.
12. Encourage County residents to obtain burning permits for open burning from May 10 through October 20. Sheriff's Office usually coordinates this effort.
13. With over 10,000 acres of Conservation Reserve Program (CPR) ground in Clark County, this type of fuel needs treatment to isolate it from other fuels in the same area.
14. Develop a County evacuation plan.
15. Provide the appropriate fire service resources to maintain an effective emergency response system to wildland fires.
16. Explore the potential of making dead timber available as firewood for the general public in Federal fuel reduction programs. As a fuel reduction measure, support the Caribou-Targhee N.F. in making dead timber along forest roads available for firewood.
17. Work with local educators to establish a wildland fire component in the public school fire education program.
18. Encourage hazard fuel treatment on Federal and private land adjacent to moderate and high-risk areas.
19. Locate a contact for the railroad when it crosses Clark County. Have names and phone numbers for contacts posted at Fire Station, Sheriff's Office, and Federal and State of Idaho fire response offices.
20. Suggest Ranches and farms stack hay one-quarter mile minimum from main roads. When fire could carry to other nearby fuels.
21. Fire equipment can carry noxious weeds from fire area to fire area. It is the policy to wash vehicles especially underneath to prevent spread of weeds. This needs to be the practice with all vehicles responding to wildland fires.
22. Wildland conditions are continually changing in the County and the Wildland Committee should meet quarterly beginning October 2003 to review the plan and update where needed.

TABLE I
FIRE RISK EVALUATION

	<u>FUEL</u>	<u>SLOPE</u>	<u>ACCESS</u>	<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>FIRE OCC.</u>	<u>VALUE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>RATING</u>
Birch Creek	3	2	8	7	8	3	31	moderate
Crooked Creek	4	2	9	6	5	3	29	moderate
Medicine Lodge	3	2	6	6	13	7	37	high
Beaver Creek								
Monida	2	2	7	8	3	3	25	low
Pleasant Valley	4	3	7	8	6	7	35	high
Three Mile	3	2	7	6	3	5	26	moderate
Cottonwood	3	2	7	6	11	5	34	moderate
Spencer	3	4	6	2	2	22	39	high
Dubois City	3	1	1	0	7	26	38	high
Sheep Station	4	2	6	4	8	2	26	moderate
Camas Creek								
Kilgore South	4	1	6	8	4	3	26	moderate
Kilgore Northwest	5	4	7	8	6	5	35	high
Kilgore Northeast	5	4	7	8	9	7	40	high

Fire Risk Rating

0-25 low
26-34 moderate
35-45 high

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, FOREST SERVICE, CITY/COUNTY
FIRE DEPT.,USDA SHEEP EXPERIMENT STATION, AND CITY OF SPENCER
EQUIPMENT LIST FOR 2002

VEHICLE	GALLONS	UNIT	LOCATION	PERSONNEL	TYPE
ENGINE 311	800	BLM	DUBOIS	5	4
ENGINE 312	300	BLM	DUBOIS	3	6
ENGINE 1511	300	FS	DUBOIS	2	6
ENGINE 1512	300	FS	DUBOIS	2	6
ENGINE 1521	300	FS	ISLAND PARK	3	6
ENGINE 1522	300	FS	ISLAND PARK	3	6
ENGINE 1531	300	FS	ASHTON	3	6
ENGINE 1532	300	FS	ASHTON	3	6
CENTENIAL CREW(wildland)	FS		ISLAND PARK	19	
HELICOPTER	FS		SWAN VALLEY	9	
DOZER 32D-6 w/transport)	BLM		IDAHO FALLS	2	2
DOZER w/transport	FS		ST. ANTHONY	2	
P-3 AIRTANKER T-26	2500		POCATELLO – APPROX. \$1.50/gal. or \$4,500/load		
ENGINE	750		DUBOIS FIRE DEPT	15 volunteers	
ENGINE	750		DUBOIS FIRE DEPT		
BRUSH TRUCK	500		DUBOIS FIRE DEPT		

The BLM/Forest Service personnel will not enter burning structures because their training and equipment is geared exclusively to the suppression of wild land fires and these actions would subject them to unacceptable risks and hazards. However, whenever it is possible, they will provide supplies and support to assist the Fire Department's suppression.

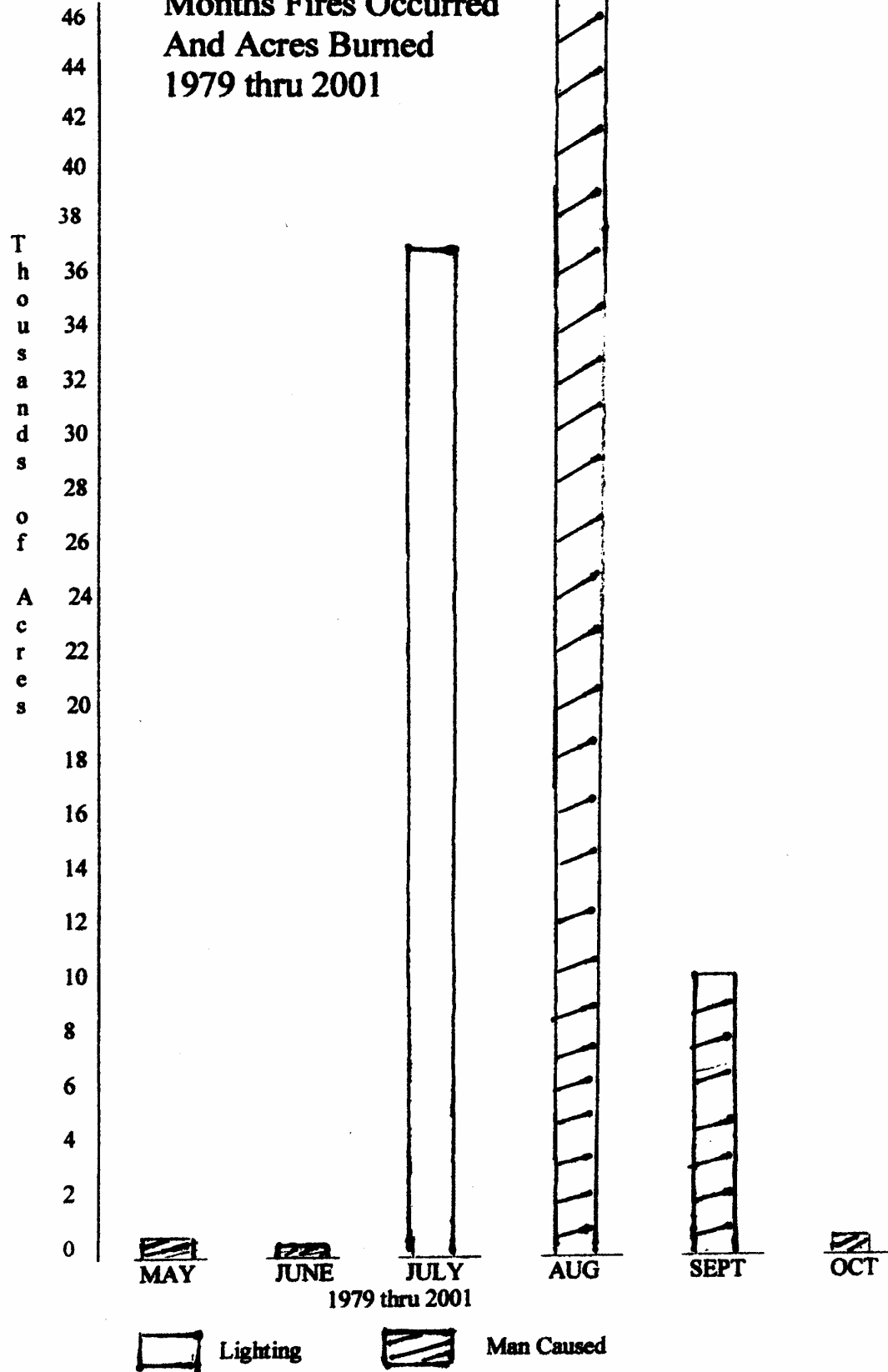
SHEEP STATION

6x6 RANGE TRUCK	1500 w/twin reel	SHEEP STATION
ROAD GRADER		SHEEP STATION
WATER TENDER	2800	SHEEP STATION
TRAILER	250	SHEEP STATION

SPENCER CITY

One, two-wheeled hand cart with approximately 50 feet of 2" hose.
 Numerous rolls of 1 ½" hose; condition unknown.
 One serviceable nozzle for 1 ½" hose.
 Six fire hydrants, gravity fed

Months Fires Occurred And Acres Burned 1979 thru 2001



NUMBER OF FIRES AND MONTHS THEY OCCURRED

